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For the first issue in the 31st Volume of the Omen on September the twelfth in the Year of our Lord 2008.

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Layout & Editing STAFF

Evan Silberman	Zeppelin
Lindsay Barbieri	Big blue circus bus
Audrey Weber	Forceps
Maggie Lowenberg	Balloons and a lawn chair
Eamonn Gallagher	Led Zeppelin
Sophie Lembeck	Feet
Zach Dougan	Catapult
Tatiana Soutar	Llama caravan
Audrey Nefores	Space elevator
Sam Bortle	Light cycle
Joshua Gannon-Solomon	Autogyro
Arielle Soutar	Ornithopter

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To Submit:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Evan Silberman, Prescott 102E, box 1394, ejs07@hampshire.edu.

"I got with this hippie girl once, and I was going down on her, and I got a piece of toilet paper in my mouth, and I was like eughhh..."

- Zach, on why he hates hippies

Front Cover:
Audrey Weber
Back Cover:
Nate Wooters

September 12, 2008

Editorial: lolwut

by Lindsay Barbieri

Things That Are Different:

Delroy is gone. Hampshire's Public Safety has joined in a Holy Alliance with Mt. Holyoke and Smith. Everyone seems happier for it.

We have a new Dean of Students! Dawn has been seen around campus checking in on things like Intern Training, Move In Day and other Student related fun happenings. She has repeatedly spoken of wanting to involve herself more fully in Hampshire events, even if it means staying after hours. Her one desire, as far as I can tell, is to make long-lasting meaningful connections with students.

Unless you've been living under a rock... or possibly in a Greenwich spaceship somewhere, you probably already know about the OneCard System in use in Merrill and Dakin. Though there have been no epic failures yet, some questions about how reasonable it is to leave your ID in various places (pub safety, house office) in exchange for keys, vacuums and the like if that makes it impossible to access your dorm hall unless it is a reasonable time of day with plenty of people around to let you in. Additionally - there are only four actual keys (not cards) that I know of, and all of them reside in the Public Safety office. I can think of several scenarios where this could be a catastrophe. Most involve zombies.

The former Student Leadership Center turned Student Development Center for Leadership (SDCL) has had another identity crisis. It is now called Campus Leadership and Activities. There is a crazy band of interns out there calling it Campus Leadership and Activities Wesources so it can become the CLAW... but so far no serious band of upstanding citizens has adopted the name change.

Ficcom has a permanent employee, club paperwork should be processed in a timely manner and things (as of Signer Seminar) seem to be becoming more streamline.

If you are over the age of 21 you are allowed to drink in your mod living rooms.

All in all, as of right now everything I have to complain about has been swept away by the strange awesomeness that Hampshire seems to be emitting. (Except for the lack of Zombie precautions on campus.) We'll see how long Hampshire can keep this up...

Things that have stayed the same:

The Omen.

Roberta.

The fact that I'm still working on layout at 11:00pm on a Monday. Hopefully Josh at duplications still loves us as much as we love him!

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited,

and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editors, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

The Omen Haiku

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

Volume 31 • Issue 1

Madame Guillotine

or, How I learned to stop worrying and love the Swedes

by Maggie Cobb

Once in a while one hears of an excuse that is so fabulously ridiculous that it sounds like a lie, but is, in fact, entirely true. It's the sort of excuse that makes one flail mentally and lament, "Goddammit, why can't I legitimately make excuses like that?!" Why can't my life be that interesting?

For example, my AP psychology class in high school was once going to be visited by a detective from the local police department who specializes in catching Internet predators. But on the day he was scheduled to come speak to us, he had to postpone the appointment because he'd been up all the previous night working on a stabbing case that still hadn't been solved. It led me to believe that detectives get the best excuses. Imagine the possibilities: "Sorry I didn't do my homework last night; I was working on a stabbing case." "Oh, gee honey, I'd love to go to your mother's for dinner, but I'm working on a stabbing case!"

However, to my delight and chagrin, I have now joined the ranks of those capable of making most excellent excuses. I'd even be happy to *tell* you my wonderful, valid excuse. All you have to do is ask me what I did this summer.

Go on, ask: what *did* you do this summer, Maggie?

What did I do? I got kicked out of France.

So, I've collapsed on Josefin Åkerblom's bed in Stockholm, Sweden, having been up since 2:45 A-fucking-M in order to catch a Ryanair flight from Frankfurt to Stockholm, and she remarks, "Yeah, I'm pretty tired, too; I didn't get a lot of sleep last night."

My response? "Well, at least you didn't get KICKED OUT OF FRANCE."

Later that day, Josefin, Faye, and I are walking Faye's dog through Västertorp, and Trolla starts whining. "She gets upset when I won't let her go wherever she wants," Faye explains, tugging on the papillon spaniel's leash.

"At least she's never been kicked out of France," I retort, glaring at the tiny pooch through narrowed eyes.

After our walk, Josefín and I return to her house—but I nearly walk right by it, inexplicably expecting the driveway to be further down the hill. Josefín chuckles at my absent-mindedness, but I leapt quickly to my own defense: “I can’t help being inattentive; I’m still recovering from the trauma

of being *kicked out of France!*"

Isn't this a wonderful excuse? Stabbing cases come and go; perps are caught, apprehended, and the case is closed until the next shakeup. But expulsion from a major European country stays with you forever! I can picture myself in ten years time—"I shouldn't have to do the dishes, Significant Other, I got kicked out of France!"

Perhaps I should elaborate on the circumstances that enabled my use of this excuse. This comes, alas, with a confession that I am somewhat reluctant to make: I didn't *actually* get kicked out of France. I did not cause any sort of outrageous international scandal. I was not booted across the border with the admonition to never return. Nicolas Sarkozy did not strike me dumb with his Evil Eyebrow and cast me from his country with a flick of his commanding, *oh-so-French* finger. In fact, I could have stayed and done some sight-seeing, but why stay at a youth hostel in Paris for three days when I can pay just as much for a plane ticket to spend a week in Sweden with my best friend who loves me and welcomes me with open arms?

I arrived in France on May 18, ready to pass the next three months as an au pair for a passel of adorable little French-speaking scamps. I quickly fell in love with the children: Jeanne (age seven) did not hesitate to tell me how much she loved me, Margo (age four) declared that I could be her big sister, and Antoine (age two) pronounced my name "Picky." Mama Charline, however, was a different story.

Don't get me wrong; at the outset, the experience looked like it would be sublime. Charline's husband sold tea, so the house was filled with the stuff. The little Alsatian village and the surrounding, rolling farmlands were beautiful. The children were delightful, there was delicious cheese on the table every night, and Charline took me to the movie theater. Such contentment was not to last. I will not get into the intricacies of the events that eventuated; I fear that to do so would only bore and confuse you with unnecessary and incomprehensible details. Suffice to say that the excrement hit the ventilating system. The kind version of the story is that things didn't ultimately work out with the family. The less kind, albeit slightly truer version, is that Charline was

a psycho-neurotic harpy bitch with selective blindness and the incapacity to let go of her past, who refused to trust my word or accept that she might, in fact, be wrong about some things.

Okay, fine, it would make sense to explain something of Charline's reasons for expelling me from her household and the lives of her children. In essence, she decided I wasn't eating enough and didn't want to spend the summer taking care of me as well as her children. Given that she herself has a history with anorexia, I can understand that she would harbor fears of it; however, *her* inability to get over past events should not have put the kibosh on *my* summer plans.

(The preceding paragraph is so utterly the ultra-diluted, Reader's Digest Condensed version of the story, it's not even funny. But if I really got into the nitty-gritty detail, I could rival the Encyclopedia Britannica in length. For serious.)

So despite that, in her own words, I was wonderful and intelligent and *gentille comme un cœur* and interacted beautifully with the kids, I still lasted less than a week. Moreover, when informed of the fact that I was leaving, I was expected to be out of the house within forty-eight hours.

I could go on for *hours* about this woman. On Monday morning, we're looking up flights to Sweden. I'd spent the previous afternoon frantically emailing cries for help to various European friends before getting a response from blessed, beautiful Josefin ("Dad says we've got you covered! What time do we pick you up at the airport?" HOORAY!). Charline wants to know if I can book a flight for Monday night. Well, no. As much as I'd like to—at this point it was difficult to say who wanted me out of the house more, Charline or myself—I'm unable to arrange such a thing. I can get a flight for Tuesday, though.

"*Tomorrow?! But tomorrow doesn't work! It's so inconvenient! I can get a sitter for today, but tomorrow just doesn't work with the kids' schedules!*" Gee, I'm sorry, Psycho-Bitch-Charline, but there's FUCK ALL I can do about the flight schedules and airline policies! You're the one kicking me out of your home and expecting me to make arrangements on ridiculously short notice; you're going to have to deal with the inconveniences that arise.

So I book a flight for early-squirrely Tuesday morning. (Recall the aforementioned 2:45 AM wake up call.) Fortunately, Psycho-Bitch-Charline's husband will be driving me, since he works semi-near the airport. I make myself scarce until the time of my departure. This isn't hard; Psycho-Bitch-Charline has even stopped calling me down

for meals, which is remarkably counter-intuitive when one considers why she's kicking me out of the house in the first place. Then she tells *les enfants* that the reason I'm leaving is because *I didn't spend enough time with them what the fuck*. This is nothing *close* to the reason she gave *me* for leaving. Thank you, Psycho-Bitch-Charline, *turn me* into the villain and make it all *my* fault! And of course Jeanne and Margo are *sobbing* and Margo is protesting, "But you were going to be my big sister!" and Jeanne is clinging to me and weeping, "It's too, too bad that you have to leave!" ... And in *flies* Psycho-Bitch-Mama-Charline like a veritable valkyrie, screeching at them to quit crying and get the fuck to sleep, she's already explained the situation to them a million damn times and they'd better deal with it. UM.

After four hours of sleep, I'm standing in the darkness of the foyer and remember that Psycho-Bitch-Charline still has to pay me for the one week I spent with them. Oh yes! She retrieves some bills from the credenza. "I owe you 125 euro, but since I gave Laura 25 for babysitting on Saturday, I'm only going to give you 100 euro." UM. Gee, you had told me that Laura was there to *help* me with the kids, not *replace* me. I really didn't want to get into an argument at 3:00 A-fucking-M and I was eager to leave, so I took that money and fled. (If *only* I'd gone to Strasbourg on Friday, instead of staying *à la maison* because I felt sick; Charline had been going to give me my first two weeks pay in advance!)

I did, however, get my revenge. I considered various acts of sabotage, but in the end I went for passive-aggressive retaliation. To whiff? That's right, I *left my trash bag in my room* for them to deal with, instead of disposing of it myself. And? I stole a banana *and two apples*, and a chunk of a baguette, for travel-munchies. Ooh, aren't I deviant and vengeful.

So ANYWAY, I took refuge in Sweden for a week, since having planned on being abroad for three months, I really didn't feel like going home just yet after only a week. And I really love the Swedes, because they are wonderful and beautiful and beatific and I think everybody should be Swedish, because it's really fabulous. Mother Theresa and Gandhi and Mr. Rogers were probably all secretly Swedish. Sweden is sunny and filled with lilacs and ridiculously attractive, bikini-clad women, and television has subtitles instead of being dubbed so Your Resident American can not only understand what's being said, but also doesn't have to endure the unsettling experience of watching Ashton Kutcher speak French. And did I mention the bikini-clad women?

Of course, by the time I got back to the United States,

June had barely begun and after recovering from jet lag, I was forced to run around southern New Hampshire and Vermont looking for a job (a task which, at the time this essay is being written, still has not been accomplished.) It's annoying, because I had a job this summer...until I got kicked out of France.

out of France.

I want to emphasize that despite my awful experience there, I don't hate France. I don't even hate the French. I just bear a shocking amount of animosity towards a certain Alsatian Momzilla and deeply resent the way her actions completely deconstructed my life in the span of twelve hours. I can't help but associate everything that's going to happen this summer with everything that was *supposed* to happen. I'm invited to a party on July 19, and my first instinct is to decline the invitation because *of course*, I can't make it, I'm going to be in Paris then OH WAIT. I won't be in Paris. Why? Because I was kicked out of France. I need to reschedule the orthodontist appointment previously set for early August because I won't be home yet OH WAIT. I'm already home, having been kicked out of France. And perhaps most upsetting, I don't even care anymore. I'm sick of francophilia. After studying French for ten years, I plan on dropping it from my schedule as soon as add/drop period starts and taking something that doesn't inspire such post-traumatic stress—like Swedish, perhaps.

Despite the 180 my summer plans made, I've come to the point where I'm rather glad I'm not spending three months in France, for a variety of reasons. I get to see my friends, I get to go to a party on July 19, I don't have to spend all that time under the same roof as a Psych-Bitch-French-Mama. After all, if I'd been forced to endure the latter, who knows what I might have done? Detective McLaughlin may have found himself dealing with another stabbing case.

But, fortunately, no blood was spilled—because I was kicked out of France. 🤨


Greetings →

by **Evan Silberman**

Greetings and salutations, faithful readers. It's Sunday evening and I'm sitting down here in the Omen office preparing this sorry issue for publication. Ordinarily this type of self-referential ranting would be confined to the editorial, but I'm not really the editor. I'm just here filling up this column. In all likelihood, my work will be obviated by the untimely arrival of the Editor, who is currently off carousing in Northampton with unspecified individuals, leaving me in the lurch with no editorial and some unspecified amount of comics yet to be provided to me.

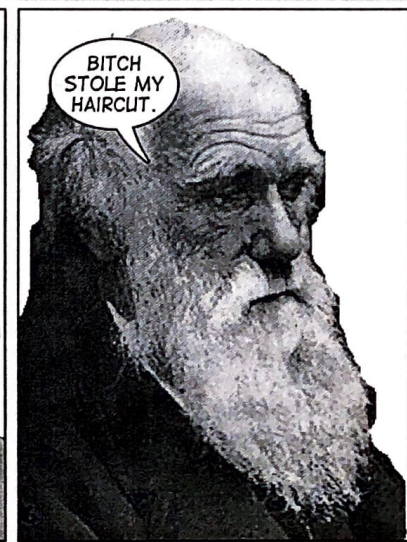
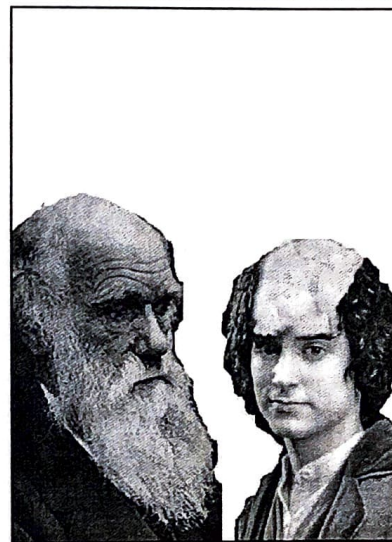
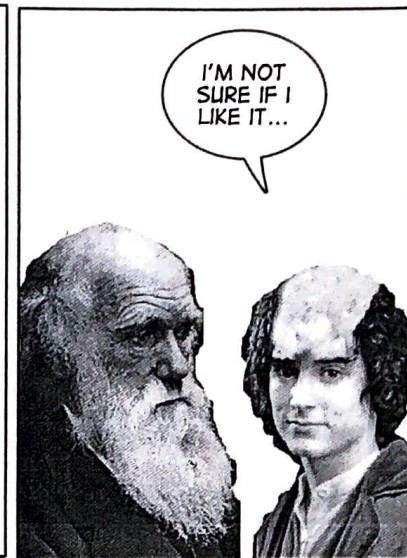
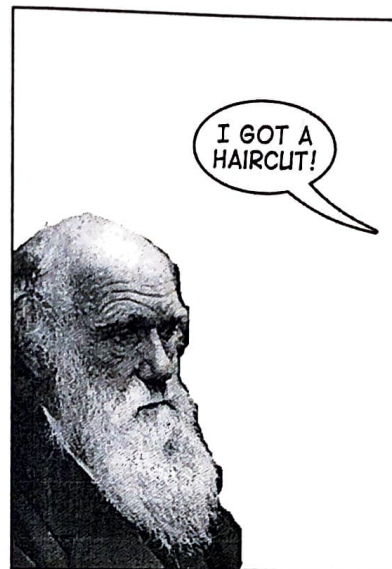
In the meantime, I should probably introduce myself. I am Evan Silberman, and I'm one of your Omen editors this fall. As you may know, the position of Omen Editor with a capital "E" is one of great power and privilege. The specific privilege is that the Omen Editor is frequently absolved from having to lay out the Omen, and instead may spend her time boozing with her Significant Other and turning in editorials far later than she really ought to. As for me, an Omen editor with a miniscule "e," I'm the one who gets to sit by himself in the lonely Omen office pretending that I know how InDesign works, arranging articles and comics in a pleasing fashion, or at least without deleting large chunks of things by accident. Inevitably, Lindsay will turn up and hand me an editorial that takes up more space than she has and the whole fucking issue will need to be rearranged.

That's as may be. Of more relevance to you, dear readers, is that I am doing this all for you. Yes, you. Each and every one of you, even those of you who can't stand this rag. The Omen is here to give a public voice to every student on this campus. I sit here late at night moving boxes around because I think the Omen is important to this campus, and so I will bring it to you, out of dedication to this idea of an open forum and open discourse. Hampshire needs the Omen, and I'm going to make sure Hampshire gets the Omen. In exchange, I ask only that you make the Omen great. I can only make it pretty. It is your submissions that are the lifeblood of this publication. Whatever you submit, we will print, as long as it can be digitally reproduced and printed in black and white. The Omen isn't me, or the other editors, or any of the noble editors who have come before. The Omen is you. And the Omen loves you. This implies that you love yourself, which I most certainly hope is the case.


So, submit. 

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Comic
by Audrey Weber



Convocation Address

by Alex Torpey 

This is the text of the speech I gave at this year's Convocation address. There weren't that many students there, so I wanted to share some of my thoughts through the Omen as well. Feel free to email me or whatever if you read this and have questions, compliments or complaints.

There is definitely a type of person who comes to Hampshire. We tend to be independent thinkers. We tend to vote left. We tend to like themed parties. And we tend to like Pabst Blue Ribbon. But more importantly, we tend to be difficult, very difficult. Don't get me wrong, this is a good thing. Difficult people are the innovators, and the pioneers. Difficult people don't accept no as an answer and don't accept the status quo as the only outcome. Difficult people don't back down, and don't stop asking why. That's what makes us all great, and that what makes us leaders. For lack of a better term, we are all alpha-dogs. We want to take the lead, and we think that we have the answers to any problems. And you know what, we often do. But there are 1300 of us.

So how do we reconcile that many passionate, innovative and aggressive minds?

We all want to be heard, but how often do we want to hear? I know I can admit that at times I go into a situation thinking that it's my way or the highway. And sometimes I'm too stubborn to admit that someone else might be right. I see a lot of that here. A lot of people talking, sometimes shouting, interrupting or otherwise trying in any way to be heard. We get frustrated because when you think you have the answer to something, it seems logical that everyone should listen to you. In our head, we've gone through the problem, examined the possibilities and found our answer. With that in mind, it almost seems logical why people tend to get upset when people ask why.

And really, I don't think being asked the question why is easy, but I have seen that simple question explode into what people perceive as an accusation. I've heard people call other people ignorant and stupid simply because someone asked the question why. Even if the person meant why because they were just curious for an explanation or reasoning, it ends up often being seen as accusatory. I've definitely had the experience of asking someone "why?" after they claim something and been met with a cold stare as if asking what

the hell my problem is for even considering that I might not agree with their assertion, or that their assertion I don't take on faith as an absolute truth.

But let's be honest. We aren't right all the time. In fact we aren't right a lot of the time. That's why we're here. There is not a single person in this room, or in the world that doesn't make mistakes from time to time, or doesn't fully understand a situation sometimes. Especially us – as students. We're here to learn. And we have so many resources. Not only classes and faculty here and the other 4 schools, but each other. There is so much we can learn by listening to each other. Let's try to frame our discourse differently.

Learning from each other is NOT about telling other people YOUR experiences, ideas, thoughts or opinions. It's about ASKING other people about THEIR experiences, ideas, thoughts and opinions.

The principles of discourse lay an phenomenal foundation for building our discussions off of. These seven principles were written by the former President of Hampshire Greg Prince.

- 1) That we value truth and the process of seeking truth as ends in themselves;
- 2) That we accept responsibility to articulate a position as close to the truth as one can make it, using the best of one's ability, available evidence and the rules of reason, logic and relevance;
- 3) That we listen openly, recognizing always that new information may alter one's position
- 4) That we welcome evaluation and accept and even encourage disagreement and criticism even to the point of seeking out for ourselves that which will disprove our position;
- 5) That we refuse to reduce disagreement to personal attacks or attacks on groups or classes of individuals;
- 6) That we value civility, even in disagreement
- And 7) That we reject the premise that ends, no matter how worthy, can justify means which violate these principles.

Overall, Hampshire is a small place. Even though it seems too big when there are 12 people in a class all trying to speak at once, 1300 is not that many people. That is to our advantage in many ways. Mostly, though, is that such a small environment means that each and every person's impact is far greater than it would be, say at a school of 20 thousand. Every idea and every action carry a much heavier weight here than somewhere else. Along with that power comes a lot of responsibility, however. We need to focus on using each of our ability for change in a positive way. In my three years at Hampshire, I haven't felt like I've been part of a community where anyone can speak up at any time.

Can't we leave all of the politics at the front gate? This isn't a debate on Fox News, we want to actually be able to talk about the issues, not just yell pre-written rhetoric at each other when tackling an important topic. This campus should be a place where anybody can freely speak their mind about anything. Hampshire is about learning. It's about experimenting... sometimes even academically. There should not be one single student here that is nervous to raise their hand in class and speak out. There should not be one student who feels like they can't go to a party because they disagreed with someone earlier that day. When an important issue arises, every single person on this campus should feel equally comfortable in contributing to the discussion.

There is this study I always love quoting, and I still can't remember which book over the years I've read this in, but I'll sum it up briefly. The study showed that in terms of critical problem solving, groups of random people that had a lot of variation politically, racially, ethnically, socio-economically, etc., fared much better at solving a problem than groups of experts, that were all of the same opinion. That discourse, that is one of the most valuable aspects of a learning community. Having to fight for your opinion and ideas builds so much strength and confidence.

It's like on campuses like Hampshire's, where there is that one Republican kid. Now you can bet that at every turn of that student's academic, and social, life that they had to stand strong for what they believed in. There was no one there to agree with, and no one to back them up. Although it's nice to be in an environment where you agree with your peers, it is intellectually boring. But that doesn't mean we can't have discourse. Some of my best friends are people that I can approach with problems and who will then argue every side, tearing my arguments and logic apart as I present

it. At the end of the day, I know they respect me, and vice versa, and at the end of the day, I know that I am much more confident in my opinion because of that discourse, because I've had the opportunity to see my shortcomings and correct them. Let's do that here. Let's use the power we all wield on this campus to create a real community where respectful discourse is not only acceptable, but encouraged.

But a cautionary note: Talking about the principles of discourse and knowing them are very different than acting on them. And to be fair, it won't be easy to re-frame discourse on this campus. But, I don't know Hampshire students to back down from a challenge, and this is a challenge where each individual person's actions have the potential for a huge impact. So let's not only challenge ourselves, but let's challenge each other to uphold respect, civility and truth in discourse on this campus and to create a legacy where people will know Hampshire College as a place that values that respect, civility and truth in its community above all else. In the end, we are all here for the same reason, to learn, let's make our \$45 thousand a year worth it and learn all we can while we are lucky enough to be in an environment of such gifted and passionate minds. Thank you. 🍌

On Securing an Independent Study at Hampshire College

by David Axel Kurtz


But I know that these things don't always work the way we expect. That old friend's, and your own, excitement of meeting after so long will last about two weeks after which she isn't so very antique anymore and all your new college-bound friends will be just as alien to you as you will be for them. The only difference in that second case is when you do go to College, the traditional "*Hello*" can be replaced with the possibly cooler, "*Don't I know you from Facebook?*"

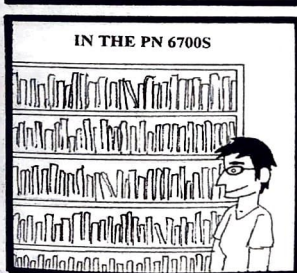
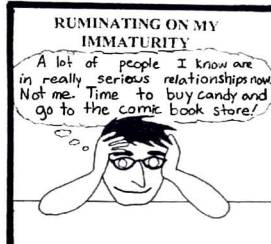
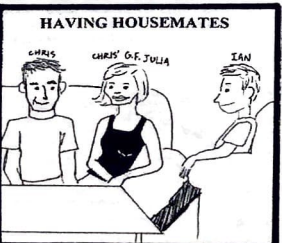
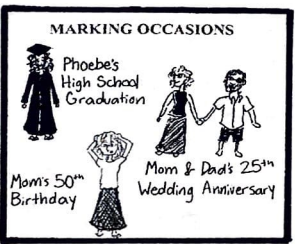
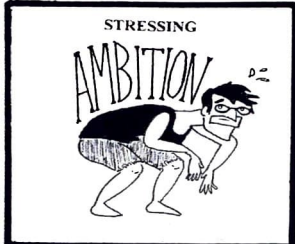
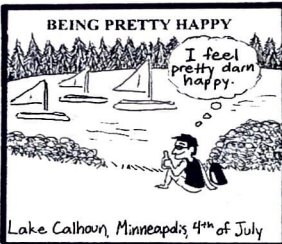
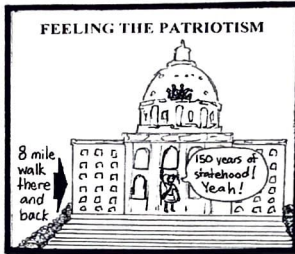
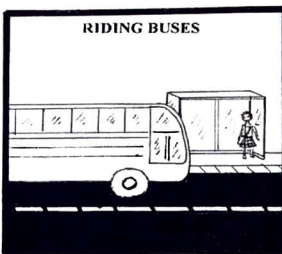
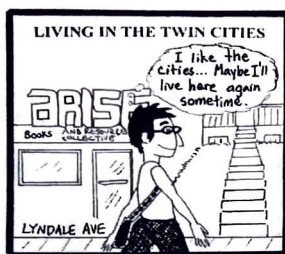
I hope that we can all transcend whatever political preferences we have, whatever petty ideological divisions that tear us apart, and recognize the fact that Mike Huckabee is just adorable. Even the name- Huckabee- it sounds like he just stepped out of the Hundred Acre woods to impart his vision of the theocratic America of the future to an adoring public. Next to Ron Paul's spindly, gun loving scarecrow he just looks like a little teddy bear. And though the act of being next to Hillary or John McCain takes ten years off anyone's face, Huckabee just looks like a happy little tyke straight out of a Hardy Boys novel, just itching to run off and solve the mystery of the missing surplus or to go to the swimming hole in the yellow jalousy. The only competition in failed presidential candidate cuteness is Denis Kucinich, who looks like a precious little hobbit. In fact, whenever I read the Fellowship of the Ring, I always picture Bilbo as looking exactly like a smiling, rosy cheeked Denis Kucinich, except maybe twenty years younger. But there's no question about it.. Huckabee has a band, for which he plays bass. When I was a freshman in high school, I always wanted to play bass for a cool band, so that means that Huckabee is not only adorable, he has at least the maturity of a prepubescent teen. Which is, comparatively, pretty impressive.

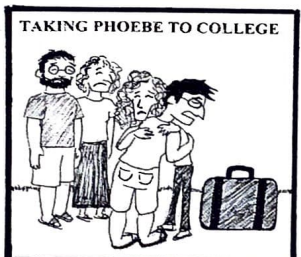
The form, signed and completed, must be passed in to Central Records before the end of the add/drop period, which usually means that it must be turned in during the first two weeks of a semester (or the first week of JanTerm). The student's enrollment in the course will appear on

MAKING BAD CHOICES

BOREDATHENA + ALCOHOL = GIMXIOUS!

A cartoon diagram illustrating the effect of alcohol. On the left, a sad face with glasses is labeled 'BOREDATHENA'. This is followed by a plus sign and a bottle of alcohol labeled 'ALCOHOL'. An equals sign follows, leading to a happy, dancing face with glasses labeled 'GIMXIOUS!'. The entire diagram is enclosed in a rectangular frame.





David's Widsom Nook
An advice column by **David Mansfield**



David Mansfield is the author of several self-help books, including *Babies Don't Like Everyone*, *Making Marriages Last*, and *The Great Big Book of Trains*. He currently teaches botany or something at Hampshire College.

So your wife is an alcoholic. Have you tried showing off your clean, healthy liver? Next time you're grooming it, make sure it's in plain sight. Over time, her jealousy might just build to the point where she has to stop drinking, if only to win the liver-off you have so cleverly set in motion.

She might drink less if there were less alcohol around, so why don't you suggest letting the dog have some? It is hard to say no to a dog.

You might also try swapping her liquor out for water while she's at work. If successful, the water will act as a placebo and she won't even know that she isn't really drunk. However, she might know right away, get angry, and hit you. So watch out for the hitting.

Whatever you do, the most important thing is that you be understanding. It might be easier to decide to quit alcohol than it is to decide to quit having parasites in your blood, but you shouldn't remind her of that because then she might get sad and drink more to make herself feel better. Be considerate.

On the other hand, you could always try becoming an alcoholic yourself, so that at least there isn't a discrepancy. Sometimes, alcoholism can be easier than dealing with your problems and slightly more fun than enduring them. 🤖

DEAR DAVID:

A few months ago, my wife got a promotion. This means more money for us, but also more responsibility for her. One of her methods of dealing with this new pressure is drinking. We used to have a glass of wine with dinner and a beer or two on the weekends, but now it seems like she can't relax until she has a buzz. Every night when she gets home, she bolts for the fridge and drinks until she relaxes. I've told her my concerns and she assures me that she's fine. But I'm worried.

—Concerned Husband Anxiously Fears Wife's Alcoholism

DEAR CHAFWA: Remember that alcoholism is a disease, not a choice. Like any other disease, it must be taken seriously and treated with the utmost—

Oh, wait, alcoholism? No, that isn't a disease, I was thinking of Blount's Disease. Hah! *Blount*. I always get those two mixed up.

We wanted to bring you a comic strip by the inestimable Nate Wootters in this space, but we don't have a version with a high enough resolution. So, instead you get to read this pointless drivel.

